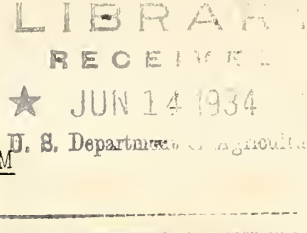


Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK FROM
1914 - 1934

A radio talk by John C. Kendall, Director, Extension Service, Durham, New Hampshire, delivered in the Land Grant College program of the National Farm and Home Hour, May 16, 1934.

Ordinarily we do not like to take the time to look backward. There is too much to see ahead. But after all, part of the fun of climbing is to glance back over the trail. So to-day let us try to pierce the mists that lie in the valley and to visualize how far we have come in cooperative extension work in the twenty years since the Smith-Lever Act started us on our way.

In 1914 we were still living in a horse-and-buggy age. Our neighbors were the people on the next farm. The county line was as far off as the State line is to-day. Nobody had heard of a Farm Bureau. It would have seemed impertinent for a group to go from farm to farm studying methods of production. As for marketing, the people who talked of buying and selling cooperatively seemed to be talking in their sleep. The eight-hour day meant eight hours in the morning and eight in the afternoon. Most farm homes did not have running water. Electricity was a luxury. Conveniences were for city people. Boys and girls did not belong to clubs. Chickens just died; there wasn't much known about pullorum disease or coccidiosis. Potatoes just rotted in a bad year; late blight wasn't controlled. In our dairy herds tuberculosis was so prevalent that nobody dared talk much about it.

To mention these few examples is not to suggest that extension work is entirely responsible for the change that has come in twenty years. Economic forces have had much to do with it. But guiding the way throughout has been a great movement which is primarily educational. It is education that has brought a new attitude toward the possibilities of science and of cooperation. And when we speak of education in this connection, we relate the whole matter to the Smith-Lever Act.

In my own State of New Hampshire we have seen the network of educational, social, and economic change spread over the entire area. Farm people have welcomed it. In each county there is an average of over 200 volunteer local leaders. We are proud to have been the first State in the Union to organize with a complete staff of county agricultural, home demonstration and junior club agents. Now, thanks to the interest of Governor Winant and the National Recreation Association and with ERA cooperation, we are putting on in each county a recreation adviser to carry into play the same spirit that has already been put into work.

In the country as a whole at last accounts there were over 6,000 paid extension workers, and -- which is more important -- over 318,000 farm men and women serving as local volunteer leaders.

The movement has worked wonders in the fields, barns, and homes of this country. It has meant a general spread of scientific production that was undreamed of twenty years ago. In our own State, for instance, the potato fields

(over)

show an average increase of 65 bushels per acre, thanks to certified seed, control of late blight, and other improved practices. The poultry are not dying to fast. We are free of bovine tuberculosis. We have an average of 800 rural boys and girls in each county in 4-H clubs. A Farmers' Exchange that grew out of the chaos of twenty years ago now does an annual business of over a million dollars. We are tackling the problems of marketing now with the same faith.

I can do no better in closing than to quote to you the words of Dr. C. B. Smith, Assistant Director of the Extension Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture in an address two years ago at the American Farm Bureau Federation:

"We are in the midst of a great revolution, out of which is coming the most efficient agriculture, the most progressive, educated, and cultured rural people since the beginning of time. Farm organizations to guide national policies and movements, experiment stations to search out the facts, agricultural colleges to train leaders, and extension forces to carry technical and economic knowledge and show their application in the field, the home, and the market places, are the forerunners in this great rural revolution. You and I are living in great days when we can play each our part in such a movement."

#